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WASHINGTON TIMES
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Obituaries

STAT

H. Freeman Matthews dies, 87; was senior career U.S. diplomat

H. Freeman Matthews, 87, a former ambassador and deputy undersecretary of state died Sunday at his home in Washington after a long illness.

Mr. Matthews was the senior living American career diplomat.

In 1950, he became the first career officer to become deputy undersecretary of state, which at that time was the third-ranking position in the State Department. He also served as ambassador to Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria.

In 1956 when Congress created the "five-star" rank of career ambassadors, Mr. Matthews was one of the first four officers selected for the designation.

He was a member of the Foreign Service for 38 years before he retired in 1962. He next was a member of the CIA's Board of National Estimates for seven years and was a recipient of the CIA's Intelligence Medal of Merit.

Mr. Matthews served as chairman of the U.S. section of the U.S.-Canadian Permanent Joint Board on Defense.

A native of Baltimore, Mr. Matthews moved to Washington when he entered the Foreign Service in 1924. A graduate of the Gilman School in Baltimore and Princeton University, he received a master's degree from Princeton and did graduate work at the Ecole Libre de Sciences Politiques in Paris.

In 1939, at the end of the Spanish Civil War, Mr. Matthews was the first U.S. representative sent to Madrid.

During the fall of France to the Nazis in World War II, Mr. Matthews accompanied the fleeing French government to Bordeaux and then became American charge d'affaires to the government of Gen. Henri Petain in Vichy.

While serving in London from 1941 to 1943 he was political adviser to Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in preparations for the Allied landings. In 1943 he became director for the Office of European Affairs, where he helped form the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee to develop Allied political planning. He also was a key adviser at the major wartime conferences at Yalta, Cairo and Potsdam and the series of post-war peace conferences in Moscow and Paris.

In 1947 he became the first U.S. ambassador to Sweden, where the previous American representatives held the title of minister.

A few day before the outbreak of the Korean War he was named deputy undersecretary of state for political affairs and for the next three years coordinated State and Defense departments' policies toward the war.

Mr. Matthews' final post was ambassador to Austria. While he was assigned to Vienna, the historic meeting took place between President John F. Kennedy and Soviet Chairman Nikita Khrushchev at the U.S. Embassy there.

He was ambassador to the Netherlands from 1953 to 1957 and ambassador to Austria from 1957 to 1962.

In 1972, Mr. Matthews was awarded the American Foreign Service Association's Cup for outstanding contributions to the conduct of U.S. foreign relations.

"No past or present officer of the American diplomatic service could better meet the definition. His contribution to an effective American foreign policy, his calm judgment, his courage and leadership have done rare credit to the Foreign Service," said the citation accompanying the award.

He was a member of the Metropolitan Club and the Chevy Chase Club.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth H. Matthews; two sons, H. Freeman Matthews Jr. of Chevy Chase, and Thomas Luke Matthews of San Rafael, Calif.; and seven grandchildren. His first wife, Elizabeth Luke Matthews died in 1955, and his second wife, Helen Skouland, died in 1966.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday in St. John's Episcopal Church, Lafayette Square.

The family suggests expressions of sympathy be in the form of contributions to the Foreign Service Association Scholarship Fund, American Foreign Service Association, 2101 E St. NW.

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